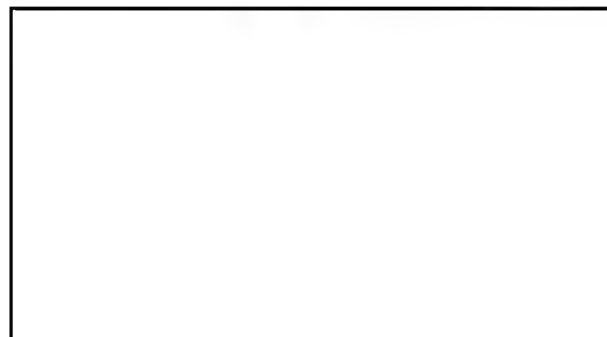


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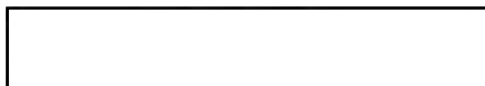
Central Intelligence Bulletin

Top Secret

REF ID: A66586 C 218

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*Panama: The National Assembly has adjourned to permit a special commission to investigate charges brought against President Robles.

The adjournment, announced after a series of 30 to 12 votes which showed the strength of Robles' opposition, came as a last-minute compromise negotiated yesterday to resolve the crisis threatened to collapse.

The commission has 10 days in which to report back to the Assembly. [redacted] opposition leader Arnulfo Arias is determined to have it do so as quickly as possible--perhaps even today.

Arias has warned that his supporters in the Assembly will impeach Robles if the President fails to implement his part of an electoral bargain struck early Monday.

According to the disputed agreement arranged at the urging of National Guard Commandant Vallarino, Robles agreed to appoint a "nonpartisan" cabinet and amend the electoral code. Robles also agreed to the appointment of a new electoral tribunal. For its part, Arias' National Union (NU) promised to drop the impeachment charges following a perfunctory session of the assembly.

The assembly met briefly late yesterday to hear the impeachment charges and then recessed--ostensibly to permit the deputies to discuss selection of the investigating commission. In fact, both sides were waiting for some evidence of the other's good faith. Meanwhile, Arias warned that unless Robles soon appointed a new cabinet, his NU deputies would press the impeachment.

There were no incidents yesterday even though an estimated 7,000 Robles and Arias partisans crowded into the assembly plaza, kept in check by Vallarino's Guard. The crowds are likely to gather again today. Their presence could lead to violence--particularly if the assembly debate becomes acrimonious as it seems likely to do.

[redacted]

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Egypt: Nasir's speech to a workers' rally on 3 March points up his deep concern over the antigovernment aspects of recent demonstrations in Egypt.

In his long address, Nasir went to some lengths to minimize the seriousness of the demonstrations, and to put the blame for inciting them on "counterrevolutionary elements." Nasir maintained that press reports of the scale of the riots were greatly exaggerated, giving the impression that they were more serious than they actually were. He also stressed that the use of force by the police to quell the disturbances resulted from a misunderstanding, since the police had been explicitly instructed to employ force sparingly.

Nasir attempted to assure his fellow Egyptians that normal protests are healthy for the country. He also insisted that "counterrevolutionary elements" had infiltrated the recent demonstrations and had given them their antigovernment character. While Nasir did not specifically identify the "reactionaries," he charged that they were opportunistic old "feudal" elements and "imperialist lackeys."

Nasir's brief mention of the Israeli "problem" near the end of the speech consisted of his usual vow to regain the occupied territories, an obvious effort to bolster his regime in the eyes of the people.

Nasir's explanations are not likely to alleviate current unrest among the Egyptians.

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Albania: An Albanian official has admitted publicly that a purge of party dissidents is under way. So far, low-level officials in only one district have been expelled. The official warned, however, that others have not lived up to the regime's expectations. The three top party and government officials have not been observed in public since early February--an unusually long absence which suggests problems at the national level. Recent rumors of dissent within the hierarchy are unconfirmed, but dissatisfaction with Albania's continued rigid alliance with Peking almost certainly exists. [REDACTED]

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